

Message Text

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12

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO AMEMBASSY MANILA PRIORITY

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AMCONGEN KARACHI

AMCONGEN LAHORE

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MANILA PASS TO USADB

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, ECRE, EAGR, PK

SUBJECT: TARBELA DAM SITUATION

REF: ISLAMABAD 11004

SUMMARY. VISIT TO TARBELA SITE BY AMBASSADOR, ECONOFF
AND AID ENGINEERING OFFICER RESULTED IN MORE OPTIMISTIC
APPRAISAL OF POSSIBILITY THAT RESERVOIR WILL BE READY FOR
STORAGE THIS COMING STORAGE SEASON THAN INDICATED IN REFTEL.
END SUMMARY.

1. AMBASSADOR, ECONOFF AND USAID ENGINEERING OFFICER SPENT
ENTIRE DAY NOV. 26 AT TARBELA DAM SITE INSPECTING TUNNEL
NO. 2 DESTRUCTION AND DISCUSSING SITUATION WITH TAMS
RESIDENT ENGINEER AND TWO SENIOR PARTNERS. ALL CONCERNED
ARE REASONABLY CONFIDENT THAT REPAIRS TO TUNNEL NO. 2 WILL
BE COMPLETED BY NEXT STORAGE SEASON. THEY ALSO CONFIRMED
THAT REPAIRS TO TUNNELS NOS. 3 AND 4 ARE WELL IN HAND AND
THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO PROBLEM IN FIXING AND EXTENDING THE
IMPERVIOUS BLANKET TO THE RESERVOIR BED.

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2. WHILE THE PROSPECTS THEREFORE LOOK FAVORABLE FOR

MEETING THE SPRING STORAGE SEASON DEADLINE OF ABOUT MAY 1, THERE MAY BE DELAYS IN FULL UTILIZATION OF TUNNEL NO. 1 WHICH IS NOW BEING USED TO CHANNEL THE ENTIRE FLOW OF THE INDUS RIVER. UNTIL TUNNEL NO. 1 CAN BE CLOSED OFF AND INSPECTED, THE ENGINEERS CANNOT BE SURE THAT IT IS IN FACT IN EXCELLENT SHAPE. FURTHERMORE, BECAUSE OF THE PROBLEMS OF AUGUST, THERE HAS BEEN A DELAY IN INSTALLING THE MID-TUNNEL GATES TO TUNNELS NOS. 1 AND 2. WHILE INSTALLATION OF THESE CAN NOW GO FORWARD ON TUNNEL NO. 2, IT WILL HAVE TO BE DELAYED IN TUNNEL NO. 1 UNTIL THAT TUNNEL IS DRY.

3. THE TIMING FOR THAT IS FOR MID-FEBRUARY. THE TAMS ENGINEERS SAID THAT THEY HOPE BY THAT DATE TO HAVE COMPLETED EXTENSION OF THE IMPERVIOUS BLANKET AND BE ADVANCED ENOUGH WITH REPAIRS TO TUNNEL NO. 2 TO BE ABLE TO CLOSE OFF TUNNEL NO. 1 AND DIVERT THE INDUS RIVER FLOW THROUGH TUNNELS NOS. 3 AND 4. THEY WILL THEN INSPECT TUNNEL NO. 1 AND BEGIN INSTALLATION OF THE MID-TUNNEL GATES THERE. SINCE IT WILL TAKE ALMOST SIX MONTHS TO PUT IN THESE GATES, THE ENGINEERS SEE LITTLE CHANCE OF MAKING TUNNEL NO. 1 OPERATIONAL BEFORE THE SPRING SNOWMELT. THEY BELIEVE A MID-SEPTEMBER COMPLETION DATE IS MORE LIKELY. THIS TIME-TABLE SHOULD NOT HOWEVER HAVE ANY PERMANENT ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE DAM'S PROGRESS.

4. THE TAMS ENGINEERS DO NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE RESERVOIR WILL EITHER HAVE TO BE DRAINED AGAIN IN THE FALL OR NOT BE ALLOWED TO RISE FULLY THIS COMING SUMMER DUE TO REPAIR DELAYS OR UNFORESEEN PROBLEMS. THEY DO NOT BELIEVE HOWEVER THAT EITHER ACTION WILL BE NECESSARY AND THEY ARE AWARE OF THE ACUTE POLITICAL PROBLEMS THESE WOULD CAUSE THE GOP.

5. THE TAMS PEOPLE ESTIMATE THAT REPAIRS TO THE DAM WILL COME TO \$32 MILLION AND THAT ADDITIONAL EXPENSES SUCH AS EXTENDING THE IMPERVIOUS BLANKET UPSTREAM WILL ADD ANOTHER \$16 MILLION, BRINGING THE COST TO ABOUT \$50 MILLION. TAMS EXPECTS TO HAVE A FIRMER ESTIMATE OF COSTS BY JANUARY 1.

6. COMMENT. WE WERE HEARTENED BY OUR VISIT TO THE DAM SITE.
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REPAIRS ARE MOVING ALONG EXPEDITIOUSLY AND WE CAME AWAY FEELING REASONABLY CONFIDENT THAT THE CONTRACTORS WILL MEET THEIR TARGET DEADLINES. END COMMENT.
BYROADE

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